

HENRY DARGER -

"THE VIVIAN

GIRLS

IN CHICAGO"

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VOLUME THIRTEEN

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the tree. The tree showed no manifestations, so he couldn't tell the results now. To his sister he said:

"Try and pass the tree towards the entrance. Keep as far as possible. If it starts acting up, run back promptly."

She started forward but nervously and then let out a scream of pain. A narrow branch of the tree rushed downward through the air and like the lash of a whip struck her across the legs, flinging her to the ground. She got away from

under before her brother needed to come to her assistance and sped towards the entrance which was the safest for her to do. The tree trunk was slowly bending forward swinging its nearest branches back and forth.

The boy got out of reach returning his out fit into the satchel. Then he hastily followed. He followed his sister into a large long-hall which to them was the most magnificent corridor they had ever seen. But though through

all of the windows the sun shone brightly, it looked gloomy and strangely hazy and dark.

They both stood (f) before a tall tree gazing at it intently and for a good reason.

"That's possessed, don't go any way near it" said George to his sister. "That thing's a killer. I've heard of it from my uncle and it killed a kid by the name of Paulinia Flannigan with a strangling phenomena."

The boy whipped out of his pocket a bottle filled with a

strange pink liquid and standing back a pace hurled the contents at it bottle and all. There was a small explosive puff of green smoke, a flame and roar, and a head on fifteen foot creature half bird half woman in appearance stood before them glowering at him but shivering.

Then it disappeared back into the hall tree.

The appearance of the horrid apparition had so horrified Nancy that she was unable to move from where

she stood for several minutes. Then recovering herself she had the urge to flee before this flying fury came again, for fear the invisible something would wrap around her throat and she had more dread of strangulation than of anything else.

But summing up her courage she stuck bravely to her post. The boy himself hesitated to advance for several minutes as he had not expected this.

"Hall we run out?"

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asked nancy in a terrified voice. "We must not suppose?"

"No, no," said her brother. "It's more dangerous to flee than to stand your ground."

They cautiously went down the hall, but strangely they were not molested by any phenomenon. They reached the grand stair case leading to the second floor and up this they sped being surprised at the immensity of the interior.

No sooner had they reached the top of the

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stairs than they were met by a more startling but not unpleasant sight.

Seven beautiful little girls and a boy were grouped there staring at the boy and girl as if they could not believe their eyes.

"Why if it ain't George Scamlon and his little sister?" exclaimed Penrod "What brought you two here?"

"We - we heard of this place and I thought I would investigate." "How did you get in? By the rear?" "No, front entrance. We

beat the Elm tree to it".
 "We have heard and read about you and your father and saw your picture often" put in Violet. "Oh if you would only help us here we would appreciate it very much as we know who and what you are."

"I came for that very purpose". said the boy.
 "you did?" cried Jennie.
 "how did you learn of our predicament?"
 "I'm a paper and magazine. And besides mother told me all about it"

Violet and her sisters and Perrod led him across the hall and into another room and introduced him and his sister to all who hearing who he was, were very glad he and his sister came.

The boy with one glance had surmised why they had such difficulty in driving out the spirits.

"This is more than I bargained for" he said. "This place is much too large and has too many rooms and the halls are too

too big and long. This gives the demons a great advantage over you. You only expell them from room to room, floor to floor, hall to hall. If driven entirely from the house they'll go into the grounds, if driven from the grounds, they'll go back into the house, or as I'll say, it's a game of hide and seek and we're 'it'. I don't even believe they're driven from this second floor though it seems so. Demons can make it seem so to de-

ceive though they may not be in the library now. I can also see that to win against the fiends you little girls would have to mainly attack at the source of this trouble and, er - what is this?" He added looking closely at the immense Palo stand-
ing before him.

Violet explained what it was, what it is used for, and where it came from, and then told in some lengthy detail how they used it in the possessed house at Collis junction, and when they

told also of the size of the house and the number of the rooms it had.

He examined it closely as they spoke.

"And the demons defy it here?" he demanded with the greatest surprise.

"They seem to" answered Gail.

"And that after you brought down into the Library keeps them out of there?"

"Yes."

"Well let's go in there and we'll be able to talk at liberty," they all did.

"If I am not mistaken I do believe you did drive those demons from Collins Junction into this place as an addition to those who were already here" he continued.

"That's just what we suspected right along as the reflection of our P. also showed them here" declared the little girls in one voice.

"You say the basement is not possessed" he asked.

"It don't seem to be" answered Violet "It's the only place without pheromones."

and she told of all the manifestations in the building not even leaving out what happened to Paulina, the orphan, the strange boy, the 'seven holes' to 'Sikes and Fagan' and the trapping of the arch bishop and others in the dome ceiling dining room.

"So the demons work phenomena that kill" said George Scamlon. "And the hall tree ban-shree is the main killer and that spirit was also seen

at Collis Junction?"

"Yes, it strangled five little girls at one time"

"Killed them?"

"Almost before we saved them"

"What do you propose to do to help us?" asked Pennod.

"I've learned a lot of things from books stating how to combat situations like these. My father in his efforts was always successful no matter how very difficult the trouble was. I learned everything from him.

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I don't care however to do a thing but to still let you and your sisters gain all the credit. But to put that through I am going to show and learn you how I will even loan you some of my books, and be here to direct you. But any of these books instruct on how to act according to the nature and size of this house. I can make the plan secretly and all you need to do is to follow it."

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"And what reward do you want?" asked Violet.

"A very great reward"

"What is that?"

"To see you, and only your sisters and your friends here win"

"But if you are helping us you sure ought to get some credit"

"Surely that ain't helping just making out the plans?"

"Oh yes it is. Oh yes it is"

"But" he continued, "you could leave me out of it and nobody will know the difference"

"Yes that's true but

it ain't fair and that would show our ingratitude. And besides" continued Pennod, "my dear boy what are to you that you would want us to have all the credit?"

"I know but in one way you are much more to every one of us kids than you think very much more.

But my plan was to let it be known that seven little girls and their brother with Webber George and the two little masters, girls drove demons out of this big old house. An unusual

event."

"It is very good of you and we appreciate it very much but it isn't fair to you just the same" declared Daisy.

"Why not have it this way?" put in Webber George. "That twelve kids nine little girls and three boys drove devils out of Mr. Sesemann's house?"

"But" -

Remember" said Pennod "if we do as you plan we are not honest with you, we are cheating. You deserve the credit as much as we do."

"Well its twelve kids

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them, before I make out my plans I would like the chance of making the rounds of the building. I have no fear. The demons cant harm us two."

"I will show you all through this building" said Violet "Perrod will come with me as I dare not go through this crazy place with him and he wont allow me to. The demons fear him not me".

While the others stayed in the room the four started their rounds. It took some

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hours before the rounds was completed, and the two never in their lives saw such a magnificent place though they themselves were well off.

"Haunted houses" said George I canlon "are described as old places, deserted ramshackle shacks, or broken down houses. But this place is more magnificent than any other place I've ever known. It dont seem possible that this place is haunted?"

"Do you doubt?" Violet asked.

"We would of, if we didnt see what that

crazy hall tree did down on the first floor. It seemed dreadfully scared of us. Is that really the apparition that killed little Paulina?"

"Some people claim it is," declared Violet "but I don't believe it".

"I've never heard of demons killing anybody" said George. "I've read of men who are called morons or degenerates who attack little and kill little girls for the purpose of rape and gutting and maybe that man who said he wanted to

see the gas meter, was a moron and killed and gutted her. Some of them really strangle kids because they like to see the protruding of their tongues. It's a sort of, fascination to them".

"No, no" said Violet. He was really the gas man. What happened to him at the same ^{time} I don't know, as I wasn't here then, but the poor man is still in St Luke's hospital. Witnesses said he flew out the main entrance like an arrow shot

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from a bow. When first brought to the hospital the doctors said he wouldn't live two hours. But he survives. He has three broken ^{ribs} ~~ribs~~, a fractured nose, and jaw, the loss of all his teeth, fractured skull, broken arms and one fractured wrist and bruised hip (thigh) and dislocated knee. The phenomenon must have flung him out onto the sidewalk headlong. The nurse says he may be there for a year

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and five months yet. We go and see him when we can.

"I understand. I came near accusing him unjustly. Mistakes will happen. You say the basement we went through is not haunted?"

"It does not seem to be" declared Jennie.

"Where was she killed?"

"On the first floor near the hall tree"

"Positively, not in the basement?"

"I couldn't say yes or no" put in Violet hesitatingly. "We were at lunch when it occurred. Witnesses said she

was killed by the
hall tree itself."

"It turned into the
apparition?"

"Yes."

and your friend Sally
Fielders was disgracefully
attacked by the gate"

"Yes"

"I'd like to give that
basement a good going
over to day. I've got
everything necessary
for ex peling any
evil spirit if its
there. Can it be
electrically lighted
all over?"

"Yes" said Pennod
I know the switch.
Why do you want

to do it?"

"I firmly believe the
basement is haunted
and the root of all the
trouble."

"You do?"

"I certainly do, and if
I'm right and it certainly
is I'd like to in-
vestigate it. Demons
are so unusually base
and de cierring that to
fool anybody they can
make it appear as if
it is not posseso-
ed. I would not be
afraid to put up an
argument when I
dare to say the sec-
ond floor is still
possessed though it

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does not seem so. I'll bet you only drove them out of the library and the music room."

"I can't understand it" declared Perrod "you see we brought the altar down into the library, replaced the big crucifix you see between those windows, and our Palco showed us" -

The library door had ^{been} left entirely open so they all could see down the hall, and Perrod was interrupted by the sound of something unseen clat-

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tering very swiftly and most noisily down the stairs to the first floor, and out of the house slamming the door violently shut. Then immediately the uncanny something threw the door open again shrieking, "Can't chase us out, can't chase us out" and slamming the door shut.

A second later it burst in again and went pounding up the stairs with a noise as if to break them down literally shaking that part of the house. Perrod

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and all the rest rushed out but saw no one.

Then in a room just across where they stood there followed a period of pulling of drawers from a dresser, violently opening and shutting them, punctuated by an unseen person dropping one drawer on the floor and shrieking out the window for some one to wait for him. Then whoever it was went charging through room after room in the immense hall slamming door after door with a most

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deafening bang and shouting to somebody does he know when Satan intends to make a sudden new fire phenomenon to chase out all the would be devil chasers, chasers or roast them alive and destroy the building this time.

There came a distant sound of voice from some unseen person, then the other who shrieked he found out when and sledge hammer full speed down the stairs and goes pounding out front entrance clos-

ing door with a final crash. Whole house totters its a miracle it doesnt collapse, but gradually goes back to normal.

For some moments everyone was silent hardly not knowing what to say or do.

Then they went into the room where the noise of pulling open and slamming dresser drawers shut was heard but to their surprise there was no dresser or any article of furniture in the room.

Now what was the meaning of all this?" asked Violet.

"Some spirit that has gone hay wire I suppose" declared Webber George "He seemed to be in an awful hurry about something and made noise and slammed door enough to beat the band."

"Maybe he was fleeing from you George" suggested Pennod.

"Most unlikely the way he kept coming back But if he was then my success is beginning" she said. "It must be one

of those manifestations you told me of. We got to be alert for that phenomenon stuff."

"Do you really think the demons would dare do it with us in here?" asked Jim Gravelon.

"If no higher power than theirs interfere yes" answered George.

But lets all of us go down to the basement. We got to find out things before I start my plans. I must know for sure if the basement is possessed

or not. If it is we'll have to arrange our plans elsewhere."

They hastened to the basement. With the switch on, it was well lighted and not at all spooky looking.

The basement had a steam heating furnace of large size and a hot water heater near the north end.

Near the basement windows facing the south end was a large oblong table against the wall, and pictures hanging above it. An old time money safe stood on the right of

the table. On the opposite wall was a six foot hall clock but it was not going. The basement was clean and neatly kept. The coal bins were across from the furnace.

One side wall was partly wood and had all sorts of pictures from newspapers and magazines tacked to it.

"The basement surely looks all right to me" declared the "Doc".

Remembering about the gas man and the gas meter

George as it is said gave it the once over? Over a nail near it was some old red sash cloth hanging and it seemed slightly shredded, and very undistinctly was making a strange writhing movement.

"It certainly does not look as if this basement is possessed" admitted George.

"I guess we'll go over to the table down by the two windows, and I'll explain my plan. I'll have to be careful as they say walls have ears."

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They filed down towards that end of the basement. The table was pulled from the wall so as many as could, could sit by it.

The boy had a book with him.

In it, it only told about possessed houses and how to combat them.

Only one however was related that was similar to Mr. Seremans house, but not one third as severe and the phenomena not at all crazy.

The directions about combating it was not very encouraging

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if attempting it in Mr. Seremans house as the former was only a two story brick affair, and Mr. Seremans was a four story from attic to ground, and covered more than half a block being a very large house.

After pondering a minute George said Frankly -

"I'll admit that the situation in this building is puzzling and very discouraging. And worse of all the grounds and the roof are also possessed. By the way did you little girl ever go and take-a

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bath in this crazy place?"

"No"

"Don't do it by all means
or you'll make the sit-
uation more dangerous.
While we made the rounds
I've took a list and num-
ber of all the rooms on
each floor, including the
halls. You say you did
mention all the phe-
nomena and disasters
in your diary?"

"Yes."

"Someone see them?"

"We do not keep the
diary here for fear the
demons would work
some drastic phe-
nomena against it."
P ena ad confessed